



Yachats 351030: What to Expect

Yachats is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Yachats is a sweet, sensitive, and playful girl who is ready to find her forever home. Yachats may be a little timid at first, but once she feels safe and secure, her charming, playful personality shines through. She loves enjoying tasty treats, zooming around the room, curling up in the sunshine on her window-side cat tower, and playing with her favorite toys. While Yachats may never be a social butterfly with everyone she meets, with patience and time to build trust, she'll form a deep bond with her special person and become a fun-loving, energetic companion.

Yachats came to OHS from the home of an overwhelmed cat caregiver that was unable to provide proper care for her. When Yachats arrived at OHS, she displayed fearful, shy behaviors that presented as hiding, cowering, darting, and hissing when the staff attempted to engage with her. Due to the level of stress she was displaying and the impact it had on her ability to comfortably interact with staff, she was enrolled in our Behavior Modification Program. The environment in the BMOD program is better suited at helping cats feel comfortable in a shelter environment. With the larger kennel space, access to windows, increased enrichment, and dedicated one-on-one time with our team, we were able to help her decompress and learn more about her personality.

Yachats was understandably worried and overwhelmed during her first few days in BMOD. She spent much of her time tucked beneath the blankets in her kennel, and whenever staff tried to engage with her, she would cower or quickly retreat to find a safe place. We respected her boundaries, spoke to her softly, and offered treats to help her begin forming positive associations with people. Before long, she was accepting treats from staff and spending less time hiding.

Although Yachats was gradually becoming more comfortable, she remained nervous around people, often watching us with wide, cautious eyes. We decided to introduce toys and see if play could help her come out of her shell—and it worked! The moment we brought out a wand toy, Yachats transformed into an agile little hunter. She expertly stalked her “prey,” pouncing with incredible enthusiasm and clearly having a wonderful time.

As she discovered how much fun playtime could be, Yachats began associating people with all the good things she loved. She learned that when people came to visit, it meant treats, toys, and plenty of fun. Today, she loves racing through crinkly tunnels, chasing toy mice, and playing with just about every toy we offer her. She’s even often spotted happily entertaining herself in her kennel with her favorite toys.

As Yachats's confidence grew, so did her trust in people. She gradually became more comfortable with gentle touch and now accepts soft scratches along her cheeks, neck, and back once she feels safe. When she’s comfortable with someone, she will roll around flirtatiously, headbutting and purring with happiness. Her future family should understand that trust takes time to build and should be prepared to go slow with her as she acclimates to new people petting her.

Yachats has also had the opportunity to meet and interact with several other cats in the BMOD program. She enjoys spending time with her feline friends, playing alongside them, racing after toys, and peacefully co-existing. Her energetic and playful personality can be a bit much for cats who prefer a quieter lifestyle, so if your cat is easily overwhelmed by a rambunctious playmate, Yachats may not be the best fit. However, she has formed friendships with cats who share her playful personality and gets along very well with them. Yachats could also thrive as the only cat in the home, as long as she has plenty of toys and enrichment to keep her entertained.

Yachats has blossomed into the playful, sweet, and happy little girl we always knew she could be. While she can still be startled by sudden movements or unfamiliar situations and may briefly run to hide, she recovers quickly with gentle reassurance and kind words. She has made tremendous progress during her time in the BMOD program, and we're confident she will continue to flourish in the right home. If you're looking for an entertaining, playful and sweet girl then Yachats may be the one for you.

Her new family should expect that she will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce her to new things slowly. Yachats typically flees and hides when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide her with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for her to relax in, such as her own hidey bed. Hiding spots that are confined to a tight spot and out of reach from you will make it difficult to build a bond with her. The room you set her up in will be the catalyst for how quickly she acclimates. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Yachats to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can she get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with her? If it's a laundry room or bathroom will the constant in and out of people and noises associated with these rooms be too much for her? By having a room without a lot of foot traffic and with appropriate hiding spots, it will allow you to work on building a relationship. While in her hiding spot, use calm voices and offer tasty treats to show you are not a threat. Place a small amount of wet food or a treat on a spoon and offer it to Yachats while in her hidey spot. Or bring a toy out and engage in play with her. Over time, by continuing to do this, Yachats will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food/toys = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

Here's how to help Yachats during your first months together:

This step is crucial in helping Yachats acclimate to her new home. Confine Yachats to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Yachats with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure she cannot get to *inappropriate* hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Instead, provide her with a safe, comfortable hiding place like her cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

Spend time with Yachats in her room. Don't force her out of her hiding spot. Instead, encourage her to come out on her own using happy talk, offering a toy or treats. Once she is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to interact with you, you can start introducing her to the rest of your home. Start by propping the door open and allowing her to come out on her own. Don't force it! If you come across something that you can tell Yachats is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Yachats has started exploring the rest of the house, give her a safe space that she can retreat to. When she is in her safe space, insist that guests leave her alone and try to ignore her yourself. That way, when she comes out, you can reward her bravery with your attention.

No visitors (at first). Allow Yachats time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Yachats the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Yachats seems curious or interested, have the new person toss her treats or offer a favorite toy. We want exciting, good things to come from new people.

Practice crate training. Leave her carrier out all the time, so it's just a part of her normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so she can go in and out on her own, making sure the door won't swing shut and frighten her. You can also clicker train her to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Yachats get comfortable with her carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

Visiting the vet: Unless it's an emergency, give Yachats time to bond to you before taking her to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if she already trusts you, your presence may help her feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Yachats is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow her to adapt in her own time. She may never be a social butterfly, and that's okay! Getting to know her and watching her come out of her shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

We're here to help!

We want Yachats to be successful in their new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior helpline at (503)416-2983 or email the BMOD Cat trainers at bmodcat@oregonhumane.org to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification department.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Yachats now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns – or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing!

Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new cat!